

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 13 and 16-19 are amended. No new matter is added.

Applicant thanks Examiner Vilakazi for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the May 7 telephone interview. The substance of the interview is incorporated into the remarks below.

Applicant appreciates the Office Action's indication that claims 2-4, 6-8, 10-12 and 14-15 are directed to allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shomura (U.S. Patent No. 6,170,465) in view of Ishikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,975,934) and Mashiki (U.S. Patent No. 6,176,220). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

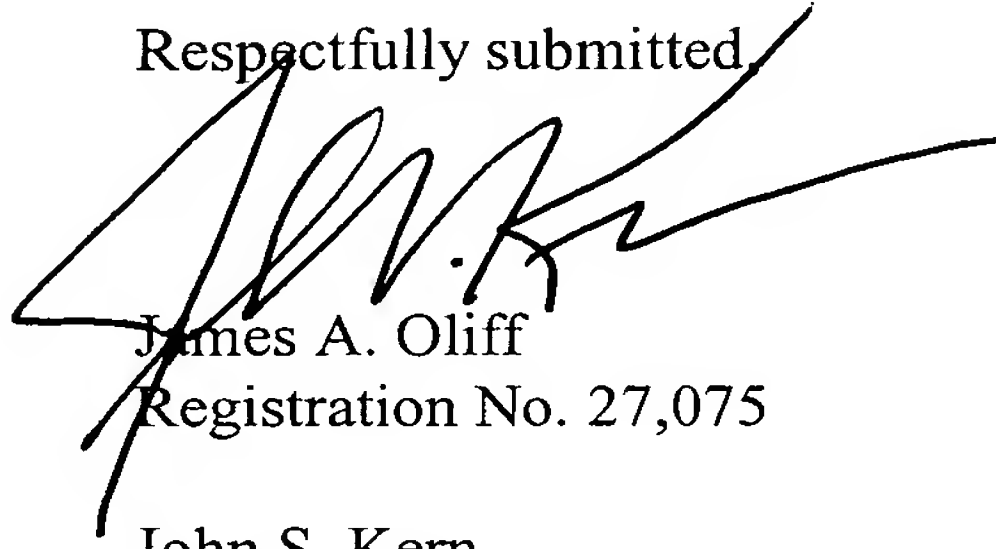
By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 are amended to incorporate allowable subject matter supported at least at claims 2 and 3. As agreed to during the personal interview, Ishikawa and Mashiki do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19, which are therefore allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 are allowable. Claims 2-4 and 14-15 depend from claim 1; claims 6-8 depend from claim 5; and claims 10-12 depend from claim 9. Accordingly, Applicant submits that all claims 1-19 are allowable.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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